

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <u>Virginia</u>	
COUNTY: <u>Bedford</u>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

Poplar Forest Thomas Jefferson's retreat

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Poplar Forest (Bedford Plantation)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: U.S. 460 to County 661, 7.4-miles, and left 0.6-miles to
house. 6.5-miles west of Lynchburg

CITY OR TOWN:

Forest

STATE

Virginia

CODE

COUNTY:

Bedford

CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
		Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>		
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:

Mr. and Mrs. James Watts, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER

Poplar Forest

CITY OR TOWN:

Forest 24551

STATE:

Virginia

CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Bedford County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Bedford

STATE

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 950-acres

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Historic American Buildings Survey (12 photos)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1940, 1958 Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local ☐

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

D.C.

CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)
 Excellent ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed ☐

INTEGRITY

(Check One)
 Altered ☒ Unaltered ☐ Moved ☐ Original Site ☒

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Poplar Forest is a brick one-story building, octagonal in shape, set on a high basement with tetrastyle pedimented Tuscan porticoes, on low arcades, on the entrance (north) and rear (south) facades. As a result of a fire in 1845, only the walls, four chimneys, and possibly the columns are original. From a drawing, circa 1820 (now in the Alderman Library, University of Virginia), by Thomas Jefferson's granddaughter, Cornelia Randolph, the original design of the exterior can be reasonably determined. The drawing shows the house crowned by a deck on an octagonal hipped roof surrounded at its base by a balustrade. Below the balustrade is a Tuscan cornice which encircles the entire house. The sloping ground on the southern side gives the house two stories in the rear. The existing roof with dormers date from 1845. The original interior plan of the house is intact, and consists of four elongated octagonal rooms around a 20-foot square central hall which was originally lighted from above. Two of the rooms, on the east and west sides, were divided in the middle by bed alcoves, similar to that in Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello. Unfortunately, there is almost no evidence indicating the appearance of the original woodwork.

Jefferson refers to an office wing, 110-feet long "...in the manner of those at Monticello, with a flat roof in the level of the house." While no trace above ground remains of this wing, a kitchen and smokehouse still stand. On either side of the house, the two original octagonal privies are discreetly hidden by artificial mounds.

In good condition, the house is used as a private residence and is not open to visitors.

Jefferson probably based the plan of the house after Plate No. 17 in Volume II of William Kent's edition of The Designs of Inigo Jones.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian ☐

16th Century ☐

18th Century ☐

20th Century ☐

15th Century ☐

17th Century ☐

19th Century ☒

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1809-26

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal ☐

Education ☐

Political ☒

Urban Planning ☐

Prehistoric ☐

Engineering ☐

Religion/Phi-

Other (Specify) ☐

Historic ☐

Industry ☐

losophy ☐

Agriculture ☐

Invention ☐

Science ☐

Art ☐

Landscape ☐

Sculpture ☐

Commerce ☐

Architecture ☐

Social/Human-

Communications ☐

Literature ☐

itarian ☐

Conservation ☐

Military ☐

Theater ☐

Music ☐

Transportation ☐

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Designed and built by Thomas Jefferson in 1806-1809, Poplar Forest served from 1809 to 1826 as his summer home and a retreat from the bustle of Monticello. The roof and interior of the house were rebuilt after a serious fire in 1845.

HISTORY

This plantation of some 4,000 acres, also known as Bedford, came into Jefferson's hands through Martha Wayles Skelton, whom he married in 1772. In order to superintend the management of the plantation he would come here and stay in a two-room cottage, then the only dwelling on the estate. In June 1781, hotly pursued by the British, Jefferson sought refuge at Poplar Forest. While there he was thrown from his horse and suffered the enforced confinement during which he wrote his Notes on Virginia.

In 1806 Jefferson designed the existing octagonal brick house, "Poplar Forest," which was completed in 1809. When visitors at Monticello became too numerous for his comfort he would retreat to Poplar Forest. Before he became President he paid only infrequent visits to the estate. But after his retirement in 1809, he would seek refuge there for a month or two at a time, usually twice a year.

On November 6, 1845, a fire began in the shingle roof of the house, burning not only the roof but the trim of the interiors as well. The present roof with its dormers was put on in 1845, but the brick walls, chimneys, and columns are original.

SEE INST. CTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

O'Neal, William B., Architecture in Virginia, New York: Walker and Company, Inc., 1968.

Watson, Lucille McWane, "Thomas Jefferson's Other Home", Antiques, April, 1957, pp. 342-346.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	37° 21' 30"	79° 17' 00"			
NE	37° 21' 30"	79° 15' 30"			
SE	37° 20' 10"	79° 15' 30"			
SW	37° 20' 10"	79° 17' 00"			

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director
 ORGANIZATION:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
 STREET AND NUMBER:
944 Street State Office Building
 CITY OR TOWN:
Richmond
 STATE:
Virginia
 CODE:
45

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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(Continuation Sheet)

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6. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory,
1958

Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

Code: 08

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #09-27
1968

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219 Code: ~~760~~

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Bedford	
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Poplar Forest property description:

Beginning on New London Road approximately 1950 feet from the intersection of New London Road and Waterlick Road, and following the road for approximately 1490 feet; thence S 49° 12' E, 190 feet; thence N 64° 18' E, 370 feet; thence N 23° 12' W, 480 feet; thence N 18° 18' E, 23 feet; thence N 42° 27' W, 52 feet; thence N 31° 3' E, 555 feet; thence N 58° 42' W, 200 feet; thence N 24° 42' W, 255 feet; thence S 31° 3' W, 515 feet; thence N 12° 20' W, 750 feet; thence N 37° 20' W, 515 feet; thence N 31° 3' E, 750 feet; thence following the Norfolk and Western Railway Low Grade Belt Line approximately 5100 feet; thence about N 28° W, approximately 1200 feet; thence S 67° 19' W approximately 1050 feet; thence S 14° 39' E, 213 feet to North Fork of Tomahawk Creek; thence S 8° 24' E, 2957 feet to Up Branch Creek; thence following Up Branch and the South Fork of the Tomahawk Creek approximately 1315 feet; thence S 23° 36' W, 725 feet; thence S 75° 54' E, approximately 1115 feet; thence S 28° 6' W, approximately 1200 feet; thence approximately N 78° W about 1800 feet; thence N 22° 40' W, 530 feet; thence S 47° 20' W, 146 feet; thence N 16° 10' W, 1089 feet; thence N 17° 28' W, 963 feet; thence N 62° 12' W, 641 feet; thence N 67° 49' W, 761 feet to beginning.

